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SECRETS OF THE FLOWERS



A WICKED FAIRY . . . KNOCKED OFF HER HEAD

(see page 9).

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SECRETS OF THE FLOWERS

TOLD TO THE CHILDREN

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Secrets of the Flowers

TOLD TO THE CHILDREN.

INTRODUCTION.

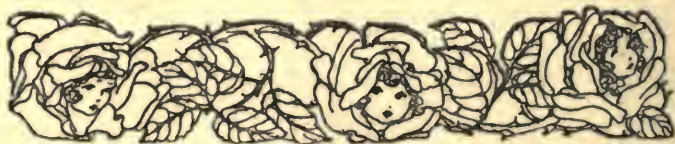
“**O**NCE upon a time”—that is the right way to begin a story, is it not?—there were no flowers upon this earth. A great King who lived a long way off was here on a visit. He had come to see that this country was ready for some of the people of his own land who were coming to live here. But when he saw



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there were no flowers, he knew his friends would feel lonely and sad ; they would miss the beautiful blossoms which grew in their old home. So, determining to make this world as lovely as possible for them, he set to work and soon made lots and lots of gay-coloured flowers.

As he had something wonderful to say to them, he appointed a certain day for them all to meet him in a wood. It was a beautiful spot. It had tall trees, long waving ferns, and soft green grasses growing all about it, but it was really surprising how much more beautiful it looked when it had ever so many colours in it. The blue-bells and violets, the roses and lilies, the poppies and sunflowers, all looked very bright with the sun shining on them, and the little fairies who lived in the holes in the oak trees smiled, for they knew that now they would have some playmates.





"ADMIRE ME; SEE HOW GORGEOUS I AM"

(see page 13)

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Presently this army of flowers came to a large circle of grass, where the bushes grew all round and the trees met overhead, so here they sat down and waited for the King. He soon came, and when he saw these smiling flowers he smiled too. It pleased him to see how eagerly they all raised their heads to greet him. They all sat very quietly waiting for him to speak, except the little hare-bells, who were really so excitable they could not keep still for long. Then the King spoke :—

“ My little children,” he said, “ my dear little children, I have made you, not only because I love to see you, but because I have a special mission for you. I am sending some people to live on this earth. Sometimes they will be sad, and you must cheer them. Sometimes they will be sick, and you must comfort them. Sometimes they will be lonely, and you must just breathe quietly so they can tell by the



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perfume that you are near, and they will thank you for reminding them of the Friend who cares for them. You must always be cheerful. Keep your faces turned to the sun that will make you bright. And I will never forget you : I will send rain to refresh you, the moon shall watch over you while you sleep, the sun shall wake you with a 'good morning' kiss. In the Winter when it is cold the snow shall keep you warm. Old people will cherish you, little children will love you. Go forth, do your duty, and my blessing shall rest on you."

So the flowers turned away, each going to its own home.



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I. THE LILY.

You all know the beautiful white lily which grows in our gardens.

Well, once upon a time, a very sad thing happened to her. A wicked fairy, just out of jealousy and spite, had knocked off her head, and all that remained of her was the tall stalk with long green leaves growing out all around it. She was very sad because her beauty was gone, but she went on growing, hoping that some day she might be useful, even if she could not be beautiful any more. All the other flowers were sorry for her, except the poppy, who was really glad, and said—

“Now I shall be queen of



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the garden, and every one will admire me most."

Often and often the poppy would whisper an unkind message to the breezes, and they had to convey it to the lily. It made these little summer breezes sad to have to speak cruel words, but they could not help themselves; they always have to give a message just as it is given to them.

When the poor lily heard the unkind things which were said, she would smile and say—

"Never mind, I can be useful, for I can shelter some little thing from the rain or the sun."

One night an angel came down from heaven, and brought a little baby to a poor woman. The woman was very glad, for she wanted something to love, and the angel stayed so long whispering of all the wonderful things the



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boy was going to do when he was a man, that she did not notice there was a storm coming. But when she opened the window gently and began to fly away, she found the rain was falling so heavily, the clouds were so black, the thunder so loud, and the lightning so vivid, that she could not go on. So in great distress she flew down into the garden. As she alighted she heard a sweet voice say—

“Just fold your wings tightly round you and come close up to me—I will shield you.”

The angel thankfully did as she was told, and hid under the broad green leaves of the lily.

“It is very kind of you,” she said.

“Oh, no!” said the lily. “Our King said we must be useful, and I am only doing what I can.”

Presently the storm ceased,



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and the moon came out, so the angel softly unfurled her wings, and stooping, kissed the lily, then flew away.

But, behold, when morning came, there was a glorious white flower on the old stalk, much more beautiful than the former one had been. All the flowers wondered how it came there, but the lily knew it came just where the angel had kissed her.



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2. THE POPPY.

If there was one thing more than another that the King disliked, it was pride.

He had written a book for the people of this country, and in it he said a good deal about his hatred of pride. Therefore it grieved him very much to find the poppy was so proud. She would lift her head, and look around as if to say—

“Admire *me*, see how gorgeous *I* am.”

And truly she was beautiful, but seeing it was the King had made her so, she ought to have been thankful instead of proud. He told her so again and again, but she would not listen. So one day he came to her and said—



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“ You must be punished for this. I will not take away your beauty, but it shall be brief. When the sun kisses you in the morning, you shall burst into loveliness, but before many hours have passed you shall fade and fall.”

The poppy only smiled. She did not think he really meant it. But he *always* means what he says, and, sure enough, the next morning when the gardener came round, he found all her leaves dropped off, and only her black heart showing. And if you go round your gardens in the middle of the day, you will find the ground where the poppies grow covered with beautiful crinkly leaves, and it will remind you of a saying in the King's book—

“ Pride goeth before a fall, and a haughty spirit before destruction.”



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3. THE ROSE.

During the time the lily was suffering from the loss of her beauty, the flowers decided they must choose another queen. The lily herself suggested it; she said they must find another blossom more worthy of the name of "queen" than she was. So again they all met. This time it was by moonlight, when all little children and grown-up folks were fast asleep. Silently the flowers crept away, one by one, to the glade in the wood. It was quite hard work to persuade the lilies of the valley to come out of their corner, they were so shy. But at last they *did* join their comrades, and even then they almost hid themselves behind their attendants, their



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broad green leaves. But the fairies knew they were there, and smiled, for their fragrance made the air so sweet.

Presently the sunflower got up to speak. He always did speak first. His friends expected him to do so. They said—

“He lives nearest the sun, so he ought to know most.”

And by the way he nodded his big yellow head all day, you really would think he was very wise indeed.

He made a nice little speech, telling the lily they were all very sorry for her, and thanking her for offering them the chance of choosing another queen. They had decided on a flower which was of most beautiful colours and most graceful form. Here the poppy, who was sitting next to a nettle, said—“Why, that surely must mean me!”

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What business the nettle had there I really do not know, but somehow he always manages to creep in with the flowers. None of them liked him, for he says such unkind things. So, on this occasion, when the poppy spoke to him, he laughed and said—

“What! want a queen whose beauty only lasts for a day. Oh, what rubbish!”

The poppy was so angry that she pushed him before she thought what she was doing, and she wished afterwards that she had not done so, for the nettle stung her badly. And she came to the conclusion that it is better to let unkind things alone. By the time this little quarrel was over, the sunflower had finished his speech, and the rose was saying—

“Yes, I will accept the position you so kindly offer me, on



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one condition, that is, if ever my sister, the lily, gets her beauty restored to her, we may share the honours between us."

They agreed to this, and the meeting broke up, the flowers trotting home as fast as they could, to get a few hours' sleep before the sun should wake them. But just as the rose was comfortably settled, she heard a light footstep coming down the garden path. Looking up, she saw the King, and telling him all that had happened that night, she said—

"Give me something, O my King, whereby I may be kept humble."

So the King put a thorn in her, saying—

"If ever you are tempted to look away from me, and to admire yourself, this thorn will remind you not to be proud."

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And kissing her gently, he left her.

In the morning, the lady of the house was walking round her garden, and noticed the rose.

“Why, what a lot of dew it holds,” she said to the gardener.

But neither of them knew it was not dew at all, but only tears of gratitude the rose held in her heart, because her King loved her.



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4. CANTERBURY BELLS.

In a city not very far away from London there are to be found some quaint old houses. Once upon a time an aged woman lay dying in one of the oldest of these. From the tiny latticed windows of her bedroom she could just see the towers of the great cathedral.

Now the old lady loved this noble building, and as long as she had been able to walk, she had gone every day just at sunset to gaze on its grey walls, and to listen to its beautiful chimes. But for years she had not been able to go for she had become crippled, and what grieved her most was the fact that she could no longer hear the bells. She had quite lost her hearing.



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One summer evening she said to her daughter—

“Raise me up, my child, that my eyes may gaze on the towers that I love. Oh, that my ears could hear the bells at even-tide!”

On the table in the middle of the room was a large bunch of beautiful white flowers. If the old lady had not been so occupied with looking out of the window she would have noticed that these flowers seemed very excited.

Presently one whispered to the others—

“Well, we will do the best we can for the poor old lady, and perhaps our King will unstop her ears so that she may hear us ringing.”

So these beautiful white bells started nodding and shaking their heads as fast as possible.



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Immediately the old lady looked up and said—

“ Daughter, hark ! can you not hear the bells ? ”

“ No, mother, can you ? ”

“ Yes, yes. Listen again ; can you hear them now ? ”

But again the daughter said “ No.”

Seeing the look of joy on the invalid’s face the little bells rang harder than ever, such a joyful, glad chime that the old lady said—

“ Oh, they are like the bells of Heaven ! ”

And so saying she died.

Just then a red ray from the setting sun fell across the bells, and they drooped their heads and died too.

Soon after the King came into the room, and seeing the look of joy on the old lady’s face, turned to discover the cause of it.



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He caught sight of the faded flowers, and tenderly taking them in his hands said lovingly—

“Ye shall bloom again, sweet blossoms, and as a lasting memorial of your kindly deed towards one of my friends, ye shall from henceforth be called “Canterbury Bells.”



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5. THE DAISY.

Have you ever gone out early in the morning and seen how carefully the daisy holds a dewdrop in her cup? Well, if you will listen you shall hear why she does so.

For a long time the daisy could not think of any way to fulfil her King's command. She was always awake before the other flowers. Sometimes she wakened early enough to see the angels sprinkling the dew out of their silver bowls over everything. She would thankfully drink the moisture she wanted and pour the remainder away.

But one summer morning, whilst she was again wondering whatever a tiny blossom like herself could do, she heard

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a mournful sigh, and looking round she saw a beautiful white butterfly, who appeared to be dying.

"Oh, what is the matter? Can I help you?" said the daisy.

"Give me a drop of water, only a little drop."

Now the little daisy felt sorry she could not grant the butterfly's request, for she was afraid he would die. But just then a shower came on, so his life was saved. But the flower had learned her lesson, and now she always saves a drop of water for any thirsty butterfly who may pass by.

One day the King saw her giving a drink to a tired traveller, and he smiled so kindly at her that she blushed ever so much—so much in fact that all the blush has not gone yet.

Next time you find a daisy,



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if you just look under the dainty white leaves, you will find the touch of pink is still left on the face of this little flower.





SHE ALWAYS SAVES A DROP OF WATER FOR ANY THIRSTY
BUTTERFLY

(see page 25)

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6. THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.

Once upon a time there was an old man who had an only son, and he was a cripple. This grieved him very much, and one day he said to his son—

“Oh, that I could get you to the great healer who lives in the wood ! I am *sure* he could cure you.”

“Alas ! my father,” said the boy, “the way is dark and long and the road is difficult ; suppose we should die before we could reach him.”

“Well,” said the old man, “I am willing to risk all to have you cured. Shall we try to get to him ? ”

“Yes,” said the lad.

So they started.

It was early in the morning when they



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set off, and at first the road was smooth, and the sun was shining. But as the day wore on the way became more difficult, till by the time darkness set in, though they had not very far to go, they still had the most difficult part of the journey to accomplish.

They struggled bravely on until they could see to go no further, and sank down in utter despair by the wayside.

"Oh," groaned the old man, "how shall we see the way?—there is no light, and none to guide us."

There were some lovely white flowers growing near, and, hearing some one in trouble, they wakened up to listen. They soon understood the difficulty, so they said—

"Now here is our opportunity to serve our King. Come, let us shine, so that this weary traveller may find the home he seeks."

So they opened their eyes as wide as



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possible, and presently through the darkness the old man saw a faint white light. As he looked at it, it grew brighter and brighter, till it shone with such lustre that the pathway was plainly marked out. So they followed the gleam, and soon found themselves in the presence of the great healer.

Next morning, as they left the house, the old man stooped to gather some of the starry white blossoms, and handing them to his son, who was now cured, said—

“Take these, my boy, and keep them, ever remembering gratefully that they served to act as our guide.”

As the flowers were being carried away the little breezes came up with a message from the King.

It was whispered so low that only *they* heard it.

“Tell them,” said the King, “that as they have guided weary travellers to me,



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they shall from this day be called 'Star of Bethlehem,' for they shall remind men of the star in the heavens that in days gone by guided the wise men of the East to the manger, where lay the Saviour of the World."



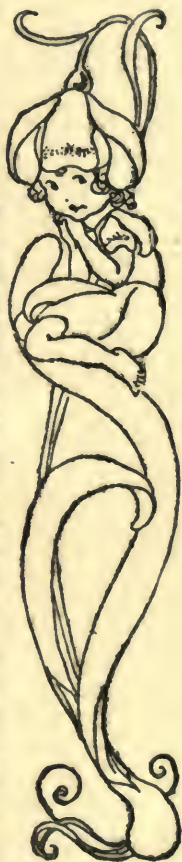


SO THEY OPENED THEIR EYES AS WIDE AS POSSIBLE
(see page 28)

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7. THE PRIMROSE.

Once upon a time there was a great battle raging in a forest. It was not a warfare with hundreds of soldiers, with cannon and guns, shot and shell, noise and smoke. No, it was a silent struggle, but nevertheless a severe one. It was between two parties : one a strong old giant, and the other a gentle maiden. The giant was cruel and cold, and when the little flowers saw him coming they hid their heads. If any were brave enough to face him, one touch of his icy fingers soon killed them. He was so strong that even great oak trees shivered when he breathed on them. For a long time he had been



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ruling in the land, and the people were weary of him.

They longed to see the flowers smiling at them again, but the poor wee things dared not show their faces because the giant would not spare one of them, no matter how beautiful it was. The King knew that his flowers wanted to come out again, so he decided that the giant must be driven away. Now it seems rather strange that he should have sent a gentle maiden on such an errand. But he often does send small things to conquer the great ones. He said to her as she went to do his bidding—

“I will be with you, you need not fear, and to remind you of my presence, I will send a messenger with you. This herald will only be small, but with its help you will conquer the giant.”

So, bravely, this maiden,



"WELL . . . I CAN'T SMELL ANYTHING," SAID THE ROBIN
(see page 36)

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whose name was "Spring," set out.

As we said before, she met the enemy in the forest. When he saw her coming he smiled to himself and said—

"Only a simple maiden, well I can soon frighten her!"

So he got up and roared so loudly that all the trees of the forest shook right down to their roots, and the ice fell off his great grey beard. He breathed so hard that it sounded like mighty rushing winds.

But secure in the promise of her King's help, the gentle Spring came on. She touched Giant Winter with her wand—a long golden rod filled with sunbeams—and feeling the touch he grew angry, because he knew there was power in it. He pushed her away and shook her so roughly that it seemed as if he had nearly killed her. But she got up



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again and touched him. This time he snatched the wand from her, and flung it away as far as possible, but it struck a tree near by and was smashed into hundreds and hundreds of tiny pieces. And a wonderful thing happened.

Every little sunbeam that fell on the grass was instantly transformed into a beautiful pale yellow primrose, and, looking at them, Giant Winter was afraid, for he saw in them the doings of the Great King. So he fled away terrified.

Then the gentle Spring stooped and gathered a primrose, and kissed it saying—

“Thus did you, sweet silent messenger, help me to overcome the great giant, and usher into this country a reign of beauty and peace.”

And ever since then the primrose has been called “The Herald of Spring.”

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8. THE WALLFLOWER.

The wallflower has always had most lovely colours, red, yellow, brown, and golden. But you will doubtless be surprised to hear how the sweet scent it possesses came to it.

It was always admired in the garden because, coming early in the spring, it seemed to say by its brightness—

“I serve as a promise of greater beauty to come.”

It had a little corner to itself and eagerly drank in the warmth and sunshine whenever it had a chance.

One day the flowers heard some tiny sparrows talking of the sights they had seen in their travels. One told of a large house where lived a lot of old men and



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women, and even little children, who were blind.

His voice grew very sad as he told how he heard them say they longed for the time when the flowers should come again.

"But," said a robin, "what is the good of flowers when you cannot see them?"

"Well, they can smell them," said a sparrow.

"Oh, can they?" said a robin. "Well, I'm hopping right on this flower and I can't smell anything. I don't think flowers without any scent are any good for blind people."

So saying, he flew away.

The poor flower was very sad to think she was "no good," and when next the King came by he found her crying. She told him why it was, and he smiled and said—



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"Would you really like to cheer these blind people?"

"Yes," said the flower.

"Well," said the King, "it means you must leave this sunny garden, and the companions you love, and go right away to live on a rough wall alone."

"If by so doing I can fulfil my mission," said the flower, "I am willing to go."

So the King sent a messenger to transplant her. And then a wonderful thing happened.

One morning the blind people were out for a walk in their grounds, and stopping in the place where the flower was growing, said, as they drew in the sweet-scented air—

"Surely this is a new flower; we never *saw* such a delightful one before."

Then was the wallflower glad because she pleased the blind folks. And she did not mind the hardness of her home, for



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out of it had come her greatest beauty. Soon the birds and the little breezes had carried the seed all over the wall, so that every year the spot that had once been bare and ugly became one mass of loveliness, and always the blind people long for the days of the wallflower to come.



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9. THE FORGET-ME-NOT.

"Once upon a time," there was a stream which ran through a beautiful wood. One day as it went its way it saw a lovely cluster of blue flowers on its banks.

"Why, it looks like a little bit of the sky resting there," said the little stream to itself. Aloud it said—

"What are you and where do you come from?"

"Oh," said the flower, "I'm a forget-me-not, and my King put me here."

"Forget-me-not, what a strange name; please what does it mean?"

"Well, for one thing, I was made to remind people of the King who loves us, and loves them too. Another part of my



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mission is to cheer the sad and lonely, by bringing to their remembrance the Home above. My King made me blue, because so many people always seem to be looking down, and suddenly they catch sight of me and are reminded of Heaven, and then they look up."

"Yes, I noticed you were the colour of the sky."

"But," said the flower, "no one ever comes to this place, it is so lonely; I do not seem to do any good here. I am afraid it will be time to go away again before I can fulfil my mission."

"Well, anyway," said the stream, "you have cheered me; I felt sad till I saw you, because there are only grey clouds overhead to-day. You don't know how much easier my journey seems on sunny days."



A SUNBEAM . . . WAS DANCING IN AND OUT AMONG THE
FORGET-ME-NOTS

(see page 42)

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"Oh, don't I know," said the flower, "I, too, like the sunshine best, but I try to be just as bright in the shadow. But where are you going?"

"On my mission," said the stream. "You see I have to take messages from high up in the far-away hills to the great ocean beyond. Old Father Neptune would never know anything about the country if I did not tell him. And I must hurry on now or I shall be missed. Good-bye, little 'Blue-eyes,' I shall not forget you."

And merrily ran the stream-let on its way.

Presently the forget-me-not thought she heard the sound of slow, weary footsteps, and looking up saw an old man. As he came along he was saying to himself—

"Oh, this is a miserable weary world. I am just tired



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of it. Things go on drearily day after day, always the same, always the same. There is no sunshine, there is no brightness, no one to care for me, no——”

But as he suddenly caught sight of the blue flowers, he stopped his complaining and his eyes filled with tears.

A little sunbeam had escaped from behind the black cloud and was dancing in and out among the forget-me-nots.

For a long time the old man stood and looked at them, then stooped and touched them tenderly, saying—

“Little heaven-sent messengers, you have spoken to my heart; how wrong it was of me to consider myself forsaken; the King who made you little ones cares for me. Out of His storehouse He has given me many blessings. I did ill to complain because *one* I wanted

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was denied to me. I have not many days to live now, but those that are left to me shall be bright with the praise of Him whose kindness is shown in the flowers He sends."

Lovingly gathering the forget-me-nots, he carried them home in his hands, but the lesson they taught him he carried in his heart all the rest of his life.



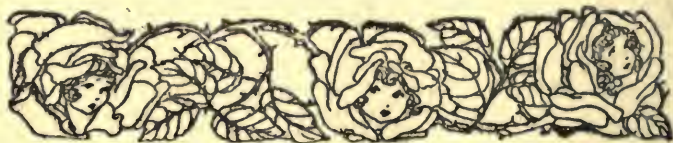
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10. HAREBELLS.

Have you children ever wandered through the woods in summer-time and watched the little harebells? They are never still, but if you look closely you will notice they are always trembling, as if excited. And this constant movement of all the bells together makes the woods look as if they lived, and lived in constant joy.

If only you had the ears that fairies have you would be able to hear their music, as they ever ring a joyful peal.

You will also notice that these little harebells are very delicate. As soon as one is taken from its place it fades. So slender is the stalk, that you sometimes wonder however it manages to stand up so straight.



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These little flowers thought they were not strong enough to do anything for their King, so they stopped him one day, and told him so.

"If only we had the strength of the sunflower," said they, "we might be able to do great deeds."

But the King smiled, and said—

"I do not want *all* to be sunflowers. There must be some small things in the world, and I can make them even more useful than the great. You shall make the woods of summer glad with your music. Every time there is a good deed done in the world you shall ring for joy."

And since then the little bells have never left off ringing.

Dear children, some folks will tell you, as you grow older, that the world is full of evil; but ever remember this—there is *far, far more good* than evil in it.

Perhaps if you were to go into the woods



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or the fields one day, and sit very still and quiet, you might hear the music of these dainty bells, and you will thank God for all the goodness there is in the world.

But even if you cannot hear them, you will *see* them shaking, and you will know that the little breezes have whispered to them of another good deed, and again they are made happy, and ring a joyful chime to the praise of their King.



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11. EDELWEISS.

Some time ago a man had a great grief.

In a few months he lost all that were dear to him ; father, mother, wife, child—all went away to the Better Land, and the man was left desolate. He thought no one had such sorrow as his, and he refused to be comforted. At last he grew so morbid that the company of his fellow-men was too much for him, so he made up his mind to seek another country, to dwell among fresh people, and see new sights, in the hope that by so doing he might forget his sorrow.

So he went away to a country that was full of snow - clad mountains, fertile valleys, and blue lakes.



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Day after day he would leave his home in the valley and wander up among the hills, but in spite of the lovely scenery, his heart was still heavy.

He found that he took his memory with him wherever he went. One day, as he was slowly climbing a snow-clad peak, he met a party of young folk who were coming down. Their merry laughter vexed him and he said—

“I will find a solitary place on this mountain where the foot of man has never trod, and I will die there; there is no one to miss me, for none are left to care what becomes of me.”

With his heart full of bitterness he wandered on.

At last he found the spot for which he sought. Solitary and sublime, it stood high up in the mountain. It looked just as if it had stood like that from

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the beginning of the world, and would remain so until the end.

Creeping between two huge rocks, that formed a natural entrance to this spot of lonely beauty, he sat down to rest.

Far away in the valley below he could see the homes of the Swiss peasants, and every now and then the song of a shepherd was borne upward to the man who sat alone with his sorrow.

Suddenly his eye lighted on something which sparkled and shone in the sunlight. So purely white was it that it was not ashamed to be compared with the snow.

Coming nearer he discovered it was a beautiful flower. He stood looking down on it, and its bright eyes seemed to look straight into his, whilst into his heart crept the message of the edelweiss—

“HE CARETH FOR YOU.”



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At first the man thought an angel had whispered it, and looked around, but all was silent and still.

Again he heard the whisper, "HE CARETH FOR YOU," and into his heart there flashed a gladness.

"Surely," said he, "there is some one who cares ; this little flower proves it, growing here, lonely and far away from the haunts of man ; yet it is perfect, and lovingly cared for. He who cares for the flowers will not forget me."

A long time this man stood watching the blossom, and it seemed to him to grow more beautiful and joyful-looking as he watched. And it really *did* so, for the edelweiss knew that her mission was fulfilled : she had served her King, and was ready to die happily.

Lovingly the man gathered and kissed her.





THE LITTLE BELLS HAVE NEVER LEFT OFF RINGING
(see page 45)

SECRETS OF THE FLOWERS

"Good-bye to the sunshine, good-bye to the snow," said she, as she was carefully put away in his pocket-book.

When he returned to his hotel that night people wondered at him. He no longer walked with slow step, with bent shoulders and with drooping head, but walked as a man into whom new life had been put.

After that he always had a bright smile and a kind word for every one. Little children no longer shunned him, but gathered round him when their play was over, and the evening shadows fell, to listen to the wonderful tales he could tell them.

And all this change was because a little flower had whispered into his heart her tender message of love and hope—

"HE CARETH FOR YOU."



SECRETS OF THE FLOWERS

12. SNOWDROPS.

Once upon a time a poor cripple lived in London.

The house in which he lived was surrounded by big factories and tall chimneys, which almost shut out the little sunshine that tried to peep in through the smoky skylight of his tiny room.

Christmas time was coming, and most boys and girls were wildly excited at the thought of joys in store for them.

Even those who did not expect to have any presents liked to stand and look in the shop windows.

The little boy in the dark garret heard of these things, but knew that none of them could be for him, for his parents were very, very poor, and could not even



SECRETS OF THE FLOWERS

find enough money for bread and coal, so it was no good expecting anything else.

On Christmas Eve some children came rushing in to tell the cripple boy that the snow had come. In spite of the fact they all looked so cold, they seemed to be delighted about it, and this puzzled little Davie.

"Snow! what is snow?" said he.

At this the children were silent, till one little girl ventured to suggest timidly she thought it was "the feathers off the angels' wings."

Another, who had once been in the country in spring time, thought it might be "the cherry blossom off the trees in Heaven."

However, they said they would go and fetch him some, and then he could see for himself what it was like.

But, alas! it all disappeared before they could bring it in, and the little cripple was sad because he wanted to see the snow,



SECRETS OF THE FLOWERS

even more than Christmas trees, and cakes, and toys.

The snow angels still continued to alight and play on the window of Davie's attic, but melted to tears almost directly at the sight of so much suffering. Presently one of them said—

“Can we not do something for the poor little boy? See here comes our King, let us ask him.”

So they asked him if they might be sent to cheer the cripple.

“Well,” said the King, “you can go to him, but if you do go it will mean that you give up the freedom of the air. No more will you be able to dance and play with each other in the sunshine; you must be shut up in the dark, cold earth. Which will you choose?”

The snow angels looked up at the sky, and then through the window at the pale-faced sufferer, and said—





DAVIE TOUCHED THEM SAYING "IS IT SNOW?"

(see page 55)

SECRETS OF THE FLOWERS

“ We will go to him.”

Then the King stooped and gathered them in his hands, and very soon they found themselves, as he had told them, shut up in the darkness of the earth.

They wondered how ever they were going to help the little boy then, but were content to let their King work his own way. They were sure it would all come right, and they had not long to wait.

That night an angel came and carried them away, and put them down by little Davie's bed.

When he wakened in the morning he saw a mass of beautiful white flowers close to him, and reaching out his thin white hand, touched them, saying wonderingly—

“ Is it snow ? ”

“ No,” said the children who had just come in, “ and yet it is like it.”

“ Well, I expect it is just snowdrops,” said a little girl.



SECRETS OF THE FLOWERS

And the little flowers nodded as if they approved of the name.

The other children had Christmas treats, but as the cripple laddie lay alone in his room, and listened quietly to the beautiful stories the snowdrops told of the Home from which they had come, the Home to which he was going, he felt there was no happier boy in the kingdom than himself, nor had anyone a more delightful Christmas Day.

And, knowing they had the approval of their King, the snowdrops also were happy.





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NAME OF BORROWER.

Paul

